2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

village headman and had to administer his slaves and relatives in his village in the same way as a village headman.[1] MacDonald shrewdly observes:

> Where the chief saw occasion to interfere with his subordinates he generally consults his own interest. He will say to a headman, 'I see that you have been behaving badly to that subject of yours. You cannot get on with him: he must leave you and come and dwell in my own village.' The chief thus secures another servant.[2]

Another writer observed, 'As a chief's power consists of the number of his subjects the loss of a man is a serious matter.'[3]

A village headman also tried to strengthen his position against the chief and against other village headmen by attracting to himself as many followers and dependants as he could. The process whereby a man might increase his status is described as follows:

> However large the settlement may become, the man that is first in the field is the chief or headman. In course of time he adorns his position by acquiring wealth. He may shoot some buck and get possession of their skin. With these he goes to the Mangoni country and buys slaves. An old person he obtains for a single skin, but a young slave costs two, and women cost much more than men. The female slaves thus bought are his junior wives and he keeps them busy in hoeing the farm, and all such female duties. The male slaves he employs in farming, building, making baskets, sewing garments and such masculine pursuits. He keeps all these persons strictly at their duties, and at the same time welcomes an opportunity of selling them at a profit. If his daughters were unmarried, he would give them slave-husbands. The natives aim at 'replenishing the earth and subduing it'. As it is no expense for them to rear families, they are all desirous to have many children.

Besides this increase of the village from the chief's own resources, there may be an accession of freemen. After the settlement is begun, a man may come to its founder and say, 'I wish to live with you.' The village chief gives him permission and calls him 'younger brother'. The newcomer brings his family, builds a house, and cultivates a farm in the same way as his chief. A freeman may leave his present chief and take up his abode with another, whose subject he becomes. His former chief has no longer any authority over him

[1] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 134. [2] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 133-6.
[3] Hynde, R. S., 'Among the Machinga People', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, viii (1892), 456-63.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

175 622 641 643 whatsoever. But a man often decamps by night taking with him many slaves belonging to his fellow-citizens; he then goes to some influential chief who may be only too glad to give the fugitive ground and to establish him as a sub-chief. Freemen who thus leave are deemed by their former chief, who welcomes every opportunity of shooting or capturing them.[1]

175 559 622 643 649 In this way village headmen, by increasing their following, increased their power against the chief. MacDonald records:

> When a person has acquired several villages, he becomes a higher headman, intermediate between the chief and the owner of a single village. Each headman lives in the village he likes best, and leaves his 'brothers' to manage his other villages. But a headman of great ambition often places his 'brothers' all around him, decides their cases, and practically governs a small kingdom of his own. If he lives far from his chief, one might suppose that he was quite independent. When a quarrel arises between the chief of the country and an important headman, the latter may rebel, and found a new kingdom, thus depriving the old chief perhaps of one-third of the villages in his dominions.[2]

MacDonald cites the case of Mkanda of Chirudzulu, who was at first a headman of Kuhlpama's but rebelled, and went to live on the southern side of the mountain.[3] He also observes that on the other hand, 'a headman may keep up his chief's authority in a district that the latter could not otherwise hold'.[4] Elsewhere he says:

> In and around his own village the chief of the country is a terrible power, and his government is supported by the most prompt and severe punishments. But in distant parts of his dominions, where influential headmen live, he may be little known, although as a matter of theory he is supposed to settle all grave disputes even in remote villages.[5]

175 643 The history of the Yao chieftaincies in MacDonald's time, and as told to me by my informants, is that of constant division into independent chieftaincies. In the Zulu and Bemba polities a strong state structure included a pattern of civil war and the main-

[1] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 141-4.
[2] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 31.
[3] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 135.
[4] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 136-9.
[5] MacDonald, *Africana*, i. 134-5.